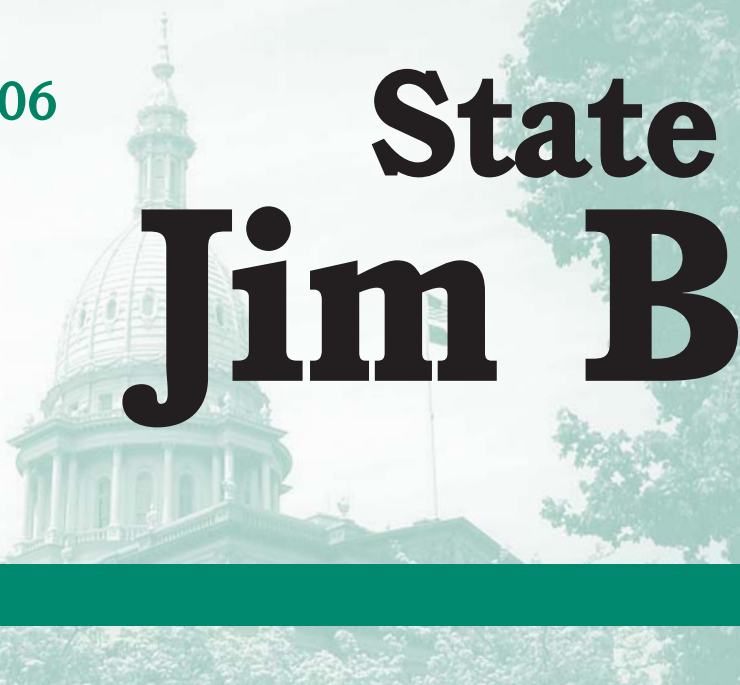


April 2006

# State Senator Jim Barcia



## CAPITOL NEWS FOR THE THIRTY-FIRST DISTRICT

Dear Friends:

Since my return to the Michigan Senate in 2003, I have tried hard to expand economic development, develop infrastructure improvements, and keep jobs in Michigan for Michigan workers. To combat free trade agreements that have cost our state hundreds of thousands of jobs, it is critical that we aggressively work to bring investments into our area and help reduce the tax burden on our small businesses and job providers.

Through cooperation with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and our local officials, we've been able to secure millions of dollars in grants and appropriations for economic development and infrastructure improvement projects in the area, resulting in keeping and creating hundreds of jobs for area residents. I've also introduced at least ten bills to spur economic development, including legislation to double the number of tax-free zones for agriculture and increase development options in older urban areas.

Last month, one of my bills that will further those efforts was signed into law. SB 52, now Public Act 70 of 2006, provides for local units of government to expand development incentives for older, functionally obsolete properties. The bill allows developers to add space or stories to a rehabilitation project and qualify for tax relief. This will greatly benefit ongoing rehabilitation projects in our downtown districts.

We must also continue to support our farmers and ensure that our agricultural industry thrives. I have introduced legislation to help promote alternative fuels like ethanol, which can be produced right here at home using home-grown commodities. Reducing foreign oil dependence, bringing down fuel prices and improving our local economies are all possible if we make this long-term commitment to explore bio-diesel fuel options.

Finally, we also need to assure that our young people are prepared for the jobs of tomorrow, which means making the critical investments in education and job training. I look forward to continuing to work with parents, teachers and administrators to increase standards and provide adequate funding for students to receive a high-quality education.

I hope you will contact me with your concerns and questions as the Senate continues to work on these and other important issues.

Sincerely,

**Jim Barcia**  
State Senator  
31st District

*Clip and Save*

### How To Reach **Senator Barcia**

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# TRANSPORTATION

## *“Jobs Today” And “Local Jobs Today” Expedite Road Projects, Create Jobs*

**J**ust over a year ago, Gov. Granholm announced her Jobs Today Initiative with the goal of creating 36,000 jobs in the next three years by fast-forwarding \$800 million worth of state infrastructure improvement projects. The projects included \$400 million directed towards accelerating statewide highway and bridge construction projects. I have strongly supported this plan to immediately create jobs and make needed improvements to our state highways and bridges.

In November, 2005, the Governor announced that, in addition to \$418 million in near-term bonds to finance the Jobs Today

program, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) would issue \$200 million in additional bonds to meet all the projects earmarked in the federal transportation bill.

The Jobs Today Initiative recognized that improving and preserving roads was essential to Michigan's economic development, as were the jobs that would be created by such improvements.

More recently, the Governor and MDOT announced a new plan to stimulate the economy and speed up local transportation projects. The Local Jobs Today plan will provide grants and loans to cities,

counties and local transit agencies to allow them to take advantage of available federal transportation funding. The plan is expected to create more than 7,100 jobs in Michigan in 2006 and 2007.

The plan will offer a combination of short-term and long-term grants to local road and transit agencies throughout the state. I have co-sponsored legislation that will amend a portion of the transportation funding law to allow the state to issue the bonds for the local transportation grants and loans. The Legislature must pass this legislation to allow local governments to begin construction this spring.

## *Portion of M-46 Renamed AMVETS Memorial Scenic Drive*

**A**merican veterans, or AMVETS, is a service organization providing support for veterans in the form of free counseling, claims assistance and legislative advocacy. Its members have made tremendous sacrifices in

serving our country, both in their military service and after discharge through service in their communities.

In honor of that service, I introduced SB 564 which proposed renaming

Highway M-46 from the intersection of M-24 and M-46 in Tuscola County and continuing east to the intersection of M-53 and M-46 in Sanilac County to AMVETS Memorial Scenic Drive. Signed into law last September, it is now known as Public Act 142 of 2005 and will remind all who travel this drive of the sacrifice and service our veterans have given.



**Senator Barcia and his guests watch as Governor Granholm signs Senate Bill 564 into law. Left to right: 1st Vice Commander Roger Maynard, Member Jerry Lynch, Commander Ray Caverly, Senator Barcia, Governor Granholm, Adjutant Don Lotter, Chris Cardinal, and Trustee Bob Phillips.**

## *We Are Here to Help*

Senator Barcia and his staff are here to help you with any problems you might be experiencing with state government. We help constituents cut through bureaucratic red tape and resolve problems. If you have a concern or a question, please don't hesitate to contact us.

# LEGISLATIVE ACTION

## *Legislative Update*

I have recently introduced three bills in the Michigan Senate. Two of those bills, SB 804 and SB 1061, will affect Michigan veterans. The third, SB 1077, will impact our Michigan economy, as well as our environment.

- SB 804 provides for 10 days of paid bereavement leave for an individual following the death of that person's spouse, child or parent during active service in the U.S. armed forces. Since the start of conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, 69 Michigan soldiers have lost their lives. This bill would help families of fallen heroes grieve and give them time to attend to funeral arrangements and other issues that come up during this stressful time.

- As a small effort to honor those who have been disabled while protecting our country, SB 1061 would expand the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to provide, at no cost, hunting and fishing licenses as well as entry and camping fees to State Parks to those residents who have been determined by the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs to be permanently and totally disabled as a result of military service. The Act would be expanded to include ex-POW's.



- In response to Michigan residents' concerns about escalating fuel prices, I introduced a companion bill to legislation already offered in the Michigan House by State Representative Jeff Mayes. SB 1077 would create the Fuels of the Future Commission to investigate and make recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature regarding alternative fuels.

Bio-diesel fuels, like sugar, corn, and soybeans, hold great promise for reducing our dependence on foreign oil and stimulating our agricultural economy in Michigan. SB 1077 passed the Senate and I am hopeful that it will soon be signed into law.

## *Legislation Introduced to Prevent Outsourcing and Protect Workers*

State Senate Democrats are continuing their push to fight outsourcing and protect Michigan jobs. The legislation comes as a result of the negligent federal free trade policies currently in effect that reward outsourcing and

devastate local economies. The package of bills includes financial protections for workers who have been outsourced and reporting requirements for companies who outsource. The legislation also requires a 60-day fair notice from

employers to workers regarding covered plant closings and layoffs and fair treatment for companies contracting with the state in seeking wage concessions.

## *Legislation That Saves Lives*

Auburn residents Benjamin and Jan Zurvalec are tirelessly working to save lives. That's because of one that was lost in October, 2001 when their son Stuart Zurvalec, 12, died of sudden cardiac arrest during a basketball tryout at his school.

The presence of an automated external defibrillator (AED) could have saved Stuart's life. And the Zurvalecs are now working to require AEDs in every Michigan school.

To that end, I introduced SB 801, which would direct money to

schools for the purchase of AEDs through a \$100,000 grant from the School Aid Fund. Local districts would apply for the grants through a 50% matching program.

On March 9, 2006 Stuart's grandparents, Ben and Julie

Zurvalec testified in front of the K-12 Appropriations Subcommittee about the need for funding in this area. The \$100,000 is currently included in the 2006-07 School Aid budget and I am hopeful that this will remain as the budget process moves forward.

**Ben and Julie Zurvalec of Essexville hold a picture of their grandson Stuart as they testify in favor of placing AEDs in public schools.**







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## Senator Barcia Honors Hometown Hero

**O**n March 4, 2006 Representative Jeff Mayes and I had the honor of presenting a tribute to a Bay City hero, an Olympian, and a bronze medal winner. Alex “Izzy” Izykowski was a speed skater on the 5,000-meter relay team at the 2006 Winter Olympic Games in Torino, Italy.

Alex started skating at the age of 10 with a pair of borrowed skates, and during his career he won races and set records that still stand today. He credits watching the 1994 Olympic Winter Games as sparking his dream of becoming an Olympian.

In 2001, Alex earned a spot on

the U.S. National Team and placed 13th in the Olympic Trials in Salt Lake City. In 2002, he took third place overall at U.S. Junior Short Track Championships. The following year, he placed eighth overall at 2003 Junior World Championships. And in 2005 he made the World Cup Team.

Alex had to overcome illness to compete in the Olympic Trials and he still skated a career best in the 1,000 meter race. And he finished second, third and fifth in the 1,500 events, reaching his dream with a spot in the 2006 Winter Olympic Games.

Then, with the world watching, he skated against the best short

track skaters on earth. He reached the semi-finals in the 1,500-meter races and his team won a bronze medal in the 5,000 relay. When he and his teammates stepped up on the platform to accept their bronze medals, Alex made the United States, Michigan and Bay City very proud.

Congratulations Alex “Izzy” Izykowski.

### *Did You Know...*

**If you’re buying a house, your new property tax will bear no direct relation to the current occupant’s tax rate. Under Proposal A, new homeowners have their property tax rates assessed at a new rate that is sometimes much higher than that of the current occupant.**

**The Michigan Department of Treasury’s Millage Rate Database and Property Tax Estimator allows individuals and business taxpayers to estimate their current and prospective property taxes as well as compare their property taxes and millage rates with other local units throughout the state.**

**<https://treas-secure.state.mi.us/ptestimator/ptestimator.asp>**

## April is Grange Month

**G**range Month is a month for state and local recognition for the Grange’s contribution to rural and urban America. Begun in 1867, the National Grange is the oldest U.S. rural community service, family-oriented

organization with a special interest in agriculture. For more information about Michigan Grange, go to:  
[www.michigangrange.org](http://www.michigangrange.org)

## Good News Regarding School Funding

**W**ith the surplus in the School Aid Fund, Michigan should be able to increase per-pupil funding to \$7,100 this year, an increase of \$225. The Senate Fiscal Agency points out that, in analyzing school aid

payments over recent years, the state has actually boosted per-pupil allocations by more than the rate of inflation.

